

He stood outside the door. He said he was dead. He said you'd be dead too, if you were shot in the head. He was sweating in a black raincoat over a nylon ski-jacket. Sweat beaded his brow, dribbled down his chin, caught in his whiskers. I wanted him to remove at least one of his coats. At first he refused. Then he said all right. I'll strip. Bastard! He tugged at the buttons. He threw the raincoat at me. Then he popped the metal buttons of the ski jacket and threw it at me too. I meekly folded them over my arm like a waiter. I carried them up the dark-varnished stairs to his room and hung them neatly in his closet. Like a valet, or a chamber maid.

When I returned to the main floor he was still hovering around the office door. He stared blankly at the clock in the hallway, wondering when he could get his next cigarette. I told him to go away, to sit in the lounge, to watch TV. He told me to fuck off. I said calm down to his broad back as he retreated down the hall into the lounge. I heard him damn me to hell, call me bastard and atheist. He read the bible regularly. He was saved. He was a lawyer, an I.T. Specialist.

*

Jack was handsome, and good-natured. He never caused any trouble, except everyone noticed that when he was away the house was a lot calmer, and a lot cleaner. There were no